

REMARKS

Claims 8-10, 18-20 and 31-43 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 8 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Matsumoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,320,829). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 8 recites that the recording information is converted into ECC blocks and reproducing limit information is embedded in the ECC blocks. Claim 8 further recites a reproducing limit information extracting device which extracts the second reproducing limit information from the ECC blocks. For example, the non-limiting embodiment of Fig. 1 illustrates an ECC encoder 3 which forms the ECC blocks and then a replacement information writing device 4 which embeds reproducing limit information into the ECC blocks. Claim 8 is allowable over Matsumoto at least because Matsumoto lacks such a combination of features.

As shown in Fig. 2, the Matsumoto watermark (alleged second reproducing limit information) is added to the signal at the watermarking unit 11, before the ECC generating unit 14. The CCI (alleged first reproducing limit information) is also added before the ECC generating unit 14. Therefore, in Matsumoto, the alleged second reproducing limit information is added to a signal, not embedded in ECC blocks first created by the conversion of recording information as claimed. Accordingly, claim 8 is allowable over Matsumoto. Also, claim 18 is allowable at least for reason similar to claim 8.

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Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 9 and 19

Claims 9 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of Park (U.S. Patent No. 6,028,932) and in view of Nagai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,938,162). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 9 depends from claim 8 and claim 19 depends from claim 18. Even if the Examiner's assertions regarding Park and Nagai were correct, these references still would not correct the deficiencies of Matsumoto with respect to claims 8 and 18. Therefore, claims 9 and 19 are allowable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

Claims 10 and 20

Claims 10 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of Nagai. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 10 depends from claim 8 and claim 20 depends from claim 18. Even if the Examiner's assertions regarding Nagai were correct, Nagai still would not correct the deficiencies of Matsumoto with respect to claims 8 and 18. Therefore, claims 10 and 20 are allowable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

New Claims

Applicants have added new claims 31-43. Claim 31 is allowable at least because the cited references fail to teach a converting device and an embedding device as set forth in claim 31. Claims 33-36 depend from claim 8, claims 37-40 depend from claim 18 and claims 32 and

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41-43 depend from claim 31. Accordingly, claims 32-43 are allowable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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23373

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Date: November 8, 2006